lost needle in the ocean is an even more hopeless endeavor. And there is Chinese idiom that fits exactly the situation — “大海捞针” (da4 hai3 lao1 zhen1).

“大” (da4) is “big,” “海” (hai3) “the sea,” “捞” (lao1) “to net” and “针” (zhen1) “a needle.” Literally, “大海捞针” (da4 hai3 lao1 zhen1) is “to net for a needle in the big sea.” Figuratively, it means a hopeless search.

Finding a long lost friend would be like “大海捞针” in the past. But now with social media and the internet, you have a much better chance of reuniting with the friend.

Terms containing the character “针” (zhen1) include:

- 針對 (zhen1 dui4) – to be directed against
- 針灸 (zhen1 jiu3) – acupuncture
- 針線 (zhen1 xian4) – needle and thread
- 針織品 (zhen1 zhi1 pin3) – knitwear